

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Cuban Free

December 16, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BUNDY

The purpose of the following sentences is to

- a. Let the American people hear from the President how effectively and responsively our military establishment reacted to the requirements of the Cuban situation and
- b. Increase understanding by the military of the crucial importance of politically limiting the use of force in order to achieve a given objective -- i.e., the withdrawal of Soviet offensive weapons from Cuba.

"The Cuban experience reassured us that our military establishment can be brought to a state of readiness promptly to meet any contingency. Equally important, this state of readiness was maintained for many days without incident. For example, SAC bombers and tankers flew over 20 million miles during the period of the airborne alert without a single accident.

"The maintenance of this strategic posture during the critical October days made possible the fully controlled and limited use of force in the waters around Cuba. The quarantine was carried out by naval vessels in a way which greatly contributed to convincing Khrushchev to take his missiles out of Cuba. The orderly and rapid build-up of ground and air forces in our Southwest made clear to the Kremlin that if the offensive weapons were not withdrawn at once, the United States had the capability to destroy the missiles quickly.

"Every American can be proud of a political system which made possible the controlled use of its military forces to ensure its security in a most difficult situation."

Ronald